Facts About Our

Slaughterhouses.

Cruelties that should be suppressed.

By

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If experience counts for anything I need make no apology for the right to speak on this matter. Backed up with over 40 years spent in and about our slaughterhouses—I have been errand lad, apprentice, slaughterman, shopman, manager, and now for over a quarter of a century in my present position—I do, at all events, know something about the modes of slaughter and their effects on meat prepared for the food of man.

While progress has touched and influenced all our industries and systems, the method of slaughtering alone has made little or no progress. Let me ask the question: "Do animals suffer needless pain by being put to death in the old manner?" To that question there can only be one answer, and that is "Yes." Past and present experience teaches me so. The pole-axe for cattle is a most uncertain weapon, even in skilled hands, and I have seen quite a number of holes made in the heads without bringing the animals to earth. Only recently I witnessed a small Ayrshire cow with the axe driven in near the eye and pulled out

again, and as the poor creature did not return to the position the slaughterman wanted, he took the axe-head in his hand and struck it with the full length of the shaft, as if it were not sufficient that the poor animal was already standing half-dazed with one hole in its head. The practice of using the pole-axe for pigs, which are not secured, is a most cruel and obnoxious one, and calls for immediate suppression. It may seem incredible, but I have seen pigs punctured seven times with the axe, and, in the case of large sows with twisted noses, I have seen over half a dozen blows inflicted before the animal fell. These experiences, with scores of others, are not confined to one place, but have been witnessed in many towns and cities, and no number of denials can rob me of what my own eyes have seen.

The hanging-up of calves by the legs I have never been able to justify. Why can a calf lying on its side not bleed as freely as either a beast, sheep or pig ? It is simply done in accordance with an old custom that should be brought to an end.

With reference to the present mode of sheep slaughter, I consider it open to great objection. After most careful personal observation I have no hesitation in saying that the breaking and severing of the spinal cord does not bring about insensibility or freedom from suffering. I have put this matter to the most careful test, and definitely state that the animal so slaughtered remains conscious of all that goes on until the loss of blood renders it unconscious. My personal opinion is that these animals should be dealt with in the same way as cattle, and rendered unconscious by some mechanical killer before being bled. I have tested the Swedish Killer and found it most efficacious. It in no way damages the head, and with very ordinary care it is not at all dangerous, as I have not found the bullet go beyond the brain.

In my early days the Jewish method of slaughter came weekly under my observation, and was always condemned as repugnant to any person with a capacity for feeling. The attitude of the Jews, who themselves demand every safeguard against Gentile-slaughtered meat being sold to them, whilst they claim the right to pass on to the Gentiles all their surplus meat and their rejected animals—which often include cattle affected with

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localised tuberculosis and other ailments—is a piece of the greatest inconsistency in a country which grants them equal rights with its own people.

Three reasons are generally advanced by the Trade against the adoption of the Humane Killer—danger, imperfect bleeding, and injurious effect on the keeping quality of the meat. With reference to the first, there is no danger if ordinary care is taken. After 23 years' experience with these Killers on cattle I can quite firmly assert that there is no danger unless due to the greatest carelessness, and there should be no hesitation in making it compulsory. The flat-headed hammer, which is still extensively used in some parts of Northumberland and Durham should be at once abolished. The method of stunning an animal with a hammer resembling a mason's hammer, only rounded at the front, and then hammering away at the head until the bone is fractured, afterwards driving in the spiked end, is barbarous, and should have been discarded years ago. Heavy cattle and hard-headed ones are simply tortured by this brutal process, which I have denounced in slaughterhouses where it is in use.

With regard to bad bleeding and the keeping quality of the meat, let me say I have demonstrated with the Humane Killer in just upon 20 towns and cities. I have never yet met a man who could point out to me any interference with the bleeding. I have inspected the meat after slaughter, and no one has ever been able to show me any difference in the meat. Last year I witnessed beasts, sheep, calves and pigs slaughtered with the Swedish Killer in London on a Saturday, and the meat remained in the slaughterhouse till the following Monday. I then interviewed the Manager of the Meat Department of Harrod's Stores, where the meat was sold, and he said he saw no signs of bad bleeding, imperfect setting or bad keeping quality.

At our abattoir we constantly get many visitors connected with the trade. Only recently we had one who has taken an active part against the Humane Killer movement. I have given them every facility to examine the beef, interview the men and make any inquiry, and still no one has been able to point out any defect in the meat through the Humane Killers. We have had

seven men connected with the Trade on our Council, and none of them has objected to the Killer. At present we have a butcher on the Health and Slaughterhouse Committee. We have another butcher, an Alderman, who used the Killer on all his cattle before the compulsory clause was adopted. Is it credible that these men would never raise a voice if the Humane instruments were a danger to the men and injurious to their meat ? No ; experience has taught them differently. I have paid unexpected visits to many abattoirs, such as Bradford, Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow and others, and I am more satisfied than ever that the pole-axe and other old methods are responsible for much preventable suffering. In many of the villages and isolated country slaughterhouses, away from Inspector, Superintendent and "humane faddists," things are greatly worse, and a terrible amount of cruelty exists in these places. There is one remedy, and one only, and that is compulsory humane slaughtering in all places. For this I have worked and written for nearly a quarter of a century, and it is to this end we move.

Every animal must be rendered unconscious by the swiftest method before any knife is used, and that should be done only by persons who are certified as capable of doing it. To all slaughterers let me commend the following lines cut out in the stonework of a German abattoir :—

THINE IS A TASK OF BLOOD;
DISCHARGE THAT TASK WITH MERCY.
LET THY VICTIM KNOW NO PAIN,
BUT LET THE SUDDEN BLOW
BRING DEATH—SUCH DEATH
AS THOU THYSELF WOULD ASK.

Then carry this out.

Published by
The Animal Defence and Anti-Vivisection Society,
35, OLD BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1.

President:
The Duchess of HAMILTON AND BRANDON.

Hon. General Secretary.
Miss LIND-AF-HAGEBY.

Printed by St. Clements Press, Ltd, Kingsway, W.C.2.